

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

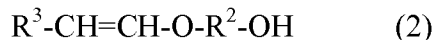
**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1-7. (canceled).

8. (previously presented): A method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula,  $\text{R}^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group,  $\text{R}^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,  $\text{R}^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and which comprises reacting a hydroxyl group-containing vinyl ether represented by the following formula (2):



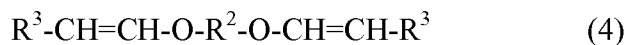
in the formula,  $\text{R}^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof,

or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and  $R^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

with a (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (3):

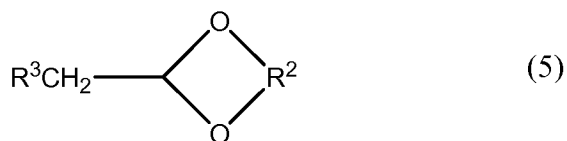


in the formula,  $R^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group and  $R^4$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 8 carbon atoms and said hydroxyl group-containing vinyl ether containing at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a divinyl ether represented by the following formula (4):



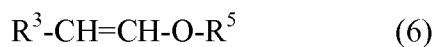
in the formula,  $R^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and the two  $R^3$  groups are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted,

a 2-substituted-1, 3-dioxo compound represented by the following formula (5):



in the formula,  $R^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and  $R^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms, and may optionally be substituted, and

an unsaturated bond-containing vinyl ether represented by the following formula (6):



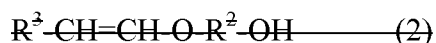
in the formula,  $R^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted;  $R^5$  represents an organic residue containing an unsaturated bond represented by  $-CR^6=CR^7$ ; and  $R^6$  and  $R^7$  are the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or an organic residue.

9. (canceled).

10. (currently amended): ~~A~~The method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester according to claim 8 represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula,  $\text{R}^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group,  $\text{R}^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and  $\text{R}^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, which comprises reacting a hydroxyl group-containing vinyl ether represented by the following formula (2):



in the formula,  $\text{R}^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and  $\text{R}^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms, and may optionally be substituted,

————— with a (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (3):



in the formula,  $\text{R}^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group and  $\text{R}^4$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 8 carbon atoms,

wherein the vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester is produced in an atmosphere such that a molecular oxygen concentration is 0.01 to 10% by volume.

11-12. (canceled).

13. (currently amended): A method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester represented by the following formula (1):



in the formula,  $\text{R}^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group,  $\text{R}^2$  represents a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms, an alkylene group containing 2 to 20 carbon atoms and having at least one oxygen atom in the form of an ether linkage and/or an ester linkage within the structure thereof, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted, and  $\text{R}^3$  represents a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aromatic group which contains 6 to 11 carbon atoms and may optionally be substituted prepared by the method of producing a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester according to claim 8,

which comprises carrying out said method of purifying a vinyl ether group-containing (meth) acrylic ester in an atmosphere such that a molecular oxygen concentration in the gaseous phase in the purification system is 0.01 to 10% by volume, wherein said purification of a vinyl ether group-containing (meth)acrylic esters is carried out in the manner of distillation purification.

14-21. (canceled).